

ALMOST A LOST ART

OLD-TIME BANK ROBBER AND CRACKSMAN HAS HAD HIS DAY.

In the Recent Years There Has Been a Hot Race Between Inventors and Crooks.

TALK WITH A SAFE EXPERT

HE THINKS THE BLOWING OF SAFES WILL BE OVERCOME.

Ingenuity of Inventors Taxed to the Utmost—Precautions Taken by Bankers and Others.

Police authorities and criminal agents all claim that the old-time cracksmen and bank robber has had his day and is now a thing of the past, and that bank robbing and safe-blowing is not to be compared to what it used to be. The reason for the infrequency of these kinds of robberies is that the safes are now so constructed that it is almost impossible for them to be forced open, and inventors are constantly being made to make them more secure. Nevertheless, while the manufacturer is racking his brain for improvements to prevent the burglar from breaking into the safe, the professional burglar is, on the other hand, testing his ingenuity to the fullest extent in making contrivances to penetrate the hard sheets of steel with which the safe lock is protected. It is hard to tell which has the better of the deal, for there is now a device which has recently been discovered that puts the cracksmen a little in the lead. It is an arrangement by which a safe door made of the hardest steel can be pierced.

This new machine is run by electricity and can be arranged so that one may fasten it to an electric wire, from which it gets its power to work. It penetrates a safe door by burning a hole straight through it, and it is known that it will pass through the hardest steel with very little noise and in a very short time. But while this invention will be an advantage to the burglar in entering the large steel-door bank safe, it will tend him to enter the smaller, the little old fire-proof affair which is generally used by small business concerns, because this electrical device will not burn through the filling that is used as the interlining of the fire-proof door. So, in one respect, the safe which is not considered burglar-proof, and has a filled door instead of one of solid steel, is more nearly burglar-proof than the steel vaults in the large banking houses.

CONSTANT SOURCE OF THOUGHT.

The cracksmen is often, even if he is sinking into obscurity, the subject of thought to bank presidents, and though it is not generally known, those who have the control of banking houses are continually trying new devices and throwing new preventives in the way of the bank robber. While at the present time the police forces of this country work with such uniformity that it is next to impossible for a criminal to escape, and while each banking concern has its own special officers who stand guard all the time, besides every known burglar alarm and safety device to prevent robbery, some one is all the time patenting some new contrivance to discourage the safe-breaker; but this is not an easy thing to do, for he is a very persistent fellow and knows something about making devices to meet the requirements of the business as well as the more expert mechanic.

Safes can be built until they are virtually burglar-proof, except for one thing, and that is where the slightest opportunity is given for them to be blown open. It will probably be some years before this can be overcome, but by safe experts it is thought that it will be only a matter of time until something will be invented to guard against it. Of course, in a place where a watchman is employed all the time entrance to the safe by this means would be impossible on account of the noise occasioned by the explosion and the falling of the doors.

Oliver Isensee, a safe expert of this city, when asked about a burglar's chances of breaking into a modern safe, said: "The burglar has practically no chance to get into the safes and money vaults as they are now constructed, and that is by the use of explosives. Of course he has to have the opportunity to use these, for if there is any chance of discovery he will surely be found out, on account of the noise that will necessarily accompany his work. As for these new electrical devices which they say the modern cracksmen is using, I don't know anything about them except what I have read, but my opinion is they are not very practical."

SAFE BLOWING.

"There is nothing so far invented to prevent or guard against safe blowing, because when an explosion occurs of sufficient force something has got to give, no matter what kind of material it is. The manner in which a safe is generally blown is that a small hole is drilled under the lock, then the nitroglycerin or dynamite, which is generally used, is inserted in this, and then it is an easy matter to proceed with the rest of the job. It doesn't take a great amount of these explosives to blow quite a large safe, for the reason that the smaller the hole is the less space the material has, the more forcible will be the explosion. Dynamite and nitroglycerin expand, and in the expansion something has got to give way."

"In my opinion it will be only a matter of time, however, when the blowing of safes will be overcome, just as the drilling of them was. It used to be that we often read of safes being drilled open and large sums of money taken from them. But since the Crane safe has been invented it makes the drilling of safes impossible. This steel is made of sheets of iron and steel laid alternately together, and then welded in such a manner that it seems a solid mass of metal. The iron layers cover the outside and they can be drilled through, but when the burglar strikes the sheet steel then he is up against a rather hard proposition, for these sheets are tempered so hard that a diamond drill, which will cut the hardest material there is, will not touch them."

"You understand that inventors are being made all the time to keep the cracksmen from working, and with every one of them his chances become smaller and smaller. One of the latest of these patents is what is called the cut-off spindle. It is, in fact, nothing more than a cog wheel placed in the middle of the safe door so as to prevent a straight hole being drilled through it. In drilling a door where a cut-off spindle is used you can go about half way through the lock, then this wheel will

ALFRED GWYNNE VANDERBILT'S COACH.



Nearly every member of the Vanderbilt family has a fad. One cares more for automobiles than any other form of sport, another is racing his horses in Austria, and Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt is creating a furore by his wild tally-ho rides between New York and Philadelphia. The young millionaire is breaking all coaching records.

stop the drill and a set-off would have to be made to continue the rest of the way. This inside cog wheel also prevents any chance of the safe breaker knocking off the outside dial and pushing it through the door.

ALWAYS A CONTEST.

"The fact of the matter is, it is always a contest between the safemaker and the burglar, and so far the safemaker has the better of it, and he always will have in my opinion, because the thief is continually working under a disadvantage. He is compelled by circumstances to work without making any noise, and this is almost impossible in the handling of the steel doors and locks which are put on the safes to-day, and then, besides, he has only a few hours in which to do his work. Burglars generally can't start a job of safe cracking until after midnight, when everything has quieted down, and they will have to be through and away before daylight or else they will be discovered. When this is taken into consideration, it is easily seen that they hardly have time to do the work where every preventive is thrown in their way."

"There has been much in the newspapers lately about safes in small towns being robbed, and, in fact, some of the towns, or what might more properly be called villages, have been thrown into great excitement on account of them. Now, from my personal observation in most of these cases where a safe has been blown and the robbers made a large haul the wrecked safe was a fireproof safe and not a burglar-proof safe. All country people have a habit, after coming to the city and selling their stock of products, of taking the money they have received for them to the general store in the town near which they live, and leaving it with the proprietor to put in the safe over night, rather than take it home. They never stop to inquire whether the safe in the store is burglar-proof or not. Just as long as it is a safe they think that their money is secure, and this is why, when a country store is robbed, the thieves are well rewarded for their trouble. Burglars watch a store of this kind which they are contemplating entering pretty closely during the daytime, and they generally know when there is a large enough sum on hand for them to go after. There is no difficulty in blowing open the fireproof safe, and this is done at little risk, as a country town is very nearly always quiet after 9 or 10 o'clock at night."

A SPECIFIC CASE.

"I know of a case that I was called to investigate," Mr. Isensee went on to say, "that occurred in Tilden, a small town west of the city, not long ago. The safe in the general store of the place was blown open one night by burglars. It contained about \$1,200, which had been left there over night by some farmers, but the robbers failed to get this because the proprietor had a banker's chest on the inside of the safe. It could be plainly seen where the burglars had made three good attempts to blow the chest, but had completely failed, whereas the safe was blown all to pieces at the first charge. In fact, the banker's chest is the only secure means of keeping money or valuables in a safe."

AN ENTHUSIASTIC SOLDIER.



LIEUT. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.

As an officer of the New York National Guard Cornelius Vanderbilt is said to be trying to prove his capability as a soldier. He has entered on his duties with great energy and is endeavoring to perfect his men in field movements.

tion which the chest occupies when in the safe is very awkward, and it is hard for the burglar to work on it. I should imagine that it would be very discouraging to the safe-breaker after working all night to get a safe open to run against one of these banker's chests, for I appreciate from my own experience how hard they are to open. This man Walters, who left town rather suddenly some time ago, has a safe in his office which I opened very easily, but when I got the doors apart I found that there was one of these chests inside, and as he had failed to leave the combination with any of his friends I could not proceed further. The only thing that I can do in a case of that kind is to break the box open, and take it apart piece by piece, for it is absolutely impossible for any one but the man who possesses the combination to open a banker's chest."

KNOWLEDGE OF CONSTRUCTION.

"Do safe-breakers ever have the same knowledge of the construction of safes as an expert?" Mr. Isensee was asked.

"Yes; once in a while you find a cracksmen who understands the building of a safe perfectly. All expert safe-robbers are, in a sense of the word, safe experts, because they have to know where the weak part of a safe is and how they can force it with as little noise and trouble as possible. There have been a number of men employed in safe factories who have turned burglars after quitting their places, and some of them have become very desperate criminals. But, on the whole, the safe-breaker is generally a very poor example of the expert, because he seldom has the opportunity of learning anything about the making of safes, and then it would not aid him a great deal if he did, because he hasn't the opportunities to work on safes and it certainly requires time and patience to open some of them."

"Where people make a great mistake is in thinking that a safe expert possesses some superhuman knowledge, and when a combination is lost he ought to be able to sit down and find it at once without any trouble. The fact is, when the combination of a safe is lost it would take a lifetime to find it. It has been figured by mathematicians that on a four-tumbler combination, where each tumbler has one hundred numbers, 100,000,000 different combinations can be worked from it. So you readily see in opening a safe of this kind, which is about the average, a man has just one chance in a hundred million of succeeding. Where the knowledge of a safe expert aids a man is that he knows how to break a safe open and do as little damage as possible. The burglar, of course, doesn't care anything about this, for it doesn't make any difference to him whether or not he ruins a safe so that it can never be used again."

A COMMON OCCURRENCE.

"A person would think that a man would not lose so important a thing as the combination of his safe, and yet it is a very common occurrence. In many small business concerns in closing the safe they will just throw off what is called the day numbers. These are used when men don't want to work the whole combination every time they open it. The janitor, maybe, when he is cleaning up the office, will give the outside dial a turn and then the combination is lost. The chances are the man who knew it in the first place has either forgotten it or else has put it in a memorandum book and locked it up in the safe. Well, the only thing that I can do is to drill the lock and insert a small wire and try to catch the tumblers and pull them around so that they will open it. But if I can't succeed in this I of course have to break the lock off. Some times people, in trying to change the combination, will lose it entirely, but if you can find what numbers they had in mind to which they were going to change it, you can very often open it on these, because they have come nearer to the combination than they supposed. But, after all, it comes down to the fact that when the combination of a safe is lost there is no such thing as finding it."

"Are there many time locks on the safes in this city?" Mr. Isensee was asked.

"Yes, there are a good many time locks used here. All of the banks and trust companies use them, and there are a number of business concerns that have them on their safes, but do not have them in use on account of the trouble in setting them; and then they very often want to get into the safe after it has been closed. You understand when a time lock closes a safe it is locked until the next morning, no matter what happens. This lock is not so much of a protection against burglars as it is against employees who know the combination. The time lock is always alluded to as though it were some kind of a peculiarly constructed lock, which it is not. It is merely a device which slips under the dog, as we call it, in the lock, and when it is shut it holds this dog in a certain position so that it cannot be moved. To open a time lock this device merely has to be broken off, and then it works similar to any other, because the bolt is then released."

order, because they are generally used on large safes where the machinery is watched very closely and where any part that seems the least worn is replaced at once. The sole cause of safes getting locked so they can't be opened, so far as my experience has been, is that people are neglectful and let some part of the safe which is in constant use wear out and get broken. If people who own safes would watch them more closely they would not have near as much trouble with them as they sometimes do."

"GREEN AND FLOWERY SPRING."

Who would keep the calendar of busy April must needs have a vigilant eye, so rapidly in the wondrous mystery of the year's renewal are signs and tokens writ on the broad, ever-fluttering pages of the great book of nature. Along the woodland winding up to the road from the little railway shanty, the everlasting-flower thrusts up from among the brown autumn leaves its fuzzy white disk—first flowery herald of the wildwood clan. Good to the feet the firm mud edges of the country lanes; and the pale young clumps of clover freely spread as air and sunshine—as long-lived and as patient as cheerfulness and hope. Everywhere and early are flung abroad the beautiful tapestries of the April grass: along the edges of the roads, across the broad meadows, down the near and distant hillsides and through the fair young orchards. If spring meant only the return of the grass, the dullest heart would be irresistibly awake to gratitude. "The symbol of perpetual youth, the grass blade—like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer."

Next in beauty to the soft, velvet, vernal carpet of the earth are the young spring shadows of bush and tree, made by the

dreamy April sunshine. Only faintly in leaf are the maples as yet—misty visions of pale pink and green—and the stubborn old oak tree near the farm gate is still in unopened bud; but their lightly swaying, long-reaching shadows play gracefully across the short sward in the warm April wind. April clouds in the blue, blue sky cast the floating masses of shadow over orchard, field and valley, and the denser shade of the evergreen trees, up and down the hillsides, makes happy mixture in April's new world of verdure.

Last week the bees—"the fervent bees"—came out of their hives under the orchard trees and were cross. Farmer John said, because they could find nothing of which to make honey. Man is ill-humored when not making money, and bees are unamiable when not making honey. Now the plum trees are in bloom, and the blossoms are full of crazy bees, flying wildly from spray to spray, and bumping against each other in mad exuberance of joy and industry. Among the yellow maple blossoms, too, they are buzzing and grumbling, darting and climbing in clumsy, inebriated gladness. Before the sun shines, after a gentle April rain, they are out again, busy and happy. What bees do on long, rainy days is a matter worth careful investigation. Ladybug is here, faded grasshoppers and spiders are nimble everywhere, ants of all kinds are scurrying nervously in all directions at once. Even our little blind brother, the mole, has caught the infectious springtime eagerness. All about, from sheer intoxication of the "vermilion earth," he is making zigzag tunnels from point to point, with great apparent waste of time, space and effort.

In the lower orchard, the crayfish settlement is hard at work, although tantalizingly never visible at its community improvements. Twenty-seven crayfish abodes open on the village streets; but the natives are so artfully retiring that no society notes could be gleaned. Sheepy, the cherished farm dog, knows the ways of Bunny cotton-tail and of the mole; but the crayfish are too much for him. He sniffs curiously and even contemptuously at their queer little towers of mud, or their slanting round holes in the moist ground, but never attempts to dig into them.

On the pretty upland farm, gilt about with hedges, lanes and woods—woods where anemones are now in bloom and bluebells echo in color the sweet April sky—all is moving forward with a precision and sureness that almost matches nature. Already are the sweet peas out of the ground, racing daintily with their homely neighbors, the young onions. Ben Bolt and old Andy, guided by faithful David, are in the south orchard, piling up the new raspberry beds, for which the young plants are waiting. Dead wood has been cut away, in berry-field and orchard; and the blue smoke of brushwood fires is floating ever among the hills. March winds are gone and April breezes flit softly and loquaciously, twisting dead leaves from the trees, sweeping the ground clean to assist new growth.

Herb-life has begun; catnip, mint and tansy are up and thriving. Setting hens are now important and the outcome a matter to be telephoned from farm to farm. Young chickens are cuddled in baskets by the household fires, and mysterious absences from the hearth towards bedtime mean that Elizabeth and Farmer John have gone out to "set a hen." Despite the encouraging inroads of general education there are still plenty of people who do not know that young chickens "peep" without opening their mouths, and that after dark is the best time to set a hen.

Rabbit-snare are abandoned now, especially since one of the pretty guinea hens was rash and greedy enough to snap at a bit of apple and get throttled. But the timid Bunny, like the esthetic daisy, is the farmer's perennial pest. Dozens of young pear trees were nibbled and killed by Bunny during the icy weather of February, and a vigorous campaign of revenge is already planned for next season. As the pretty little brown rabbit Bunny cotton-tail wins admiration; but as the ruthless despoiler of orchards, the heart of man hardens against him.

For all "dear lovers of lost hours" April is the month of pain as well as pleasure. It has been so long waited for and is so soon gone. If "fair-handed Spring" would

A SOUTH CAROLINA HERO.



MAJ. MICAH JENKINS.

While attending the Charleston Exposition recently, President Roosevelt, in behalf of the donors, presented a sword to Maj. Micah Jenkins, who participated in the Spanish-American war. Major Jenkins, it is said, has been invited to visit the President at Washington.

only tarry with us, if the "great rose of summer" could only be held back a little as it blooms and passes on; but these enchanting days, despite our heart-pangs and thankless wallings, move mercifully forward. If "June goes by like an express train" April floats over us and beyond us like a trailing banner of exquisite pale green gauze, blown on a zephyr's sigh. In this spring mood of hopeless and helpless joy, however, let us refuse to face the fact of mutability, and revel, while yet we may, in the dear delights and consolations of the dream—the delicious breath of each fair April morning the lovely young moon in the wild-rose flush over the evening hill-tops—and, after dark, low in the east, while labor sleeps, the lights of town—"The valley, lamp-bestard."

EMMA CARLETON.

New Albany, April 15.

TELEPHONE WORM TURNS.

Maddened User Sues to Recover Damages for Lost Time.

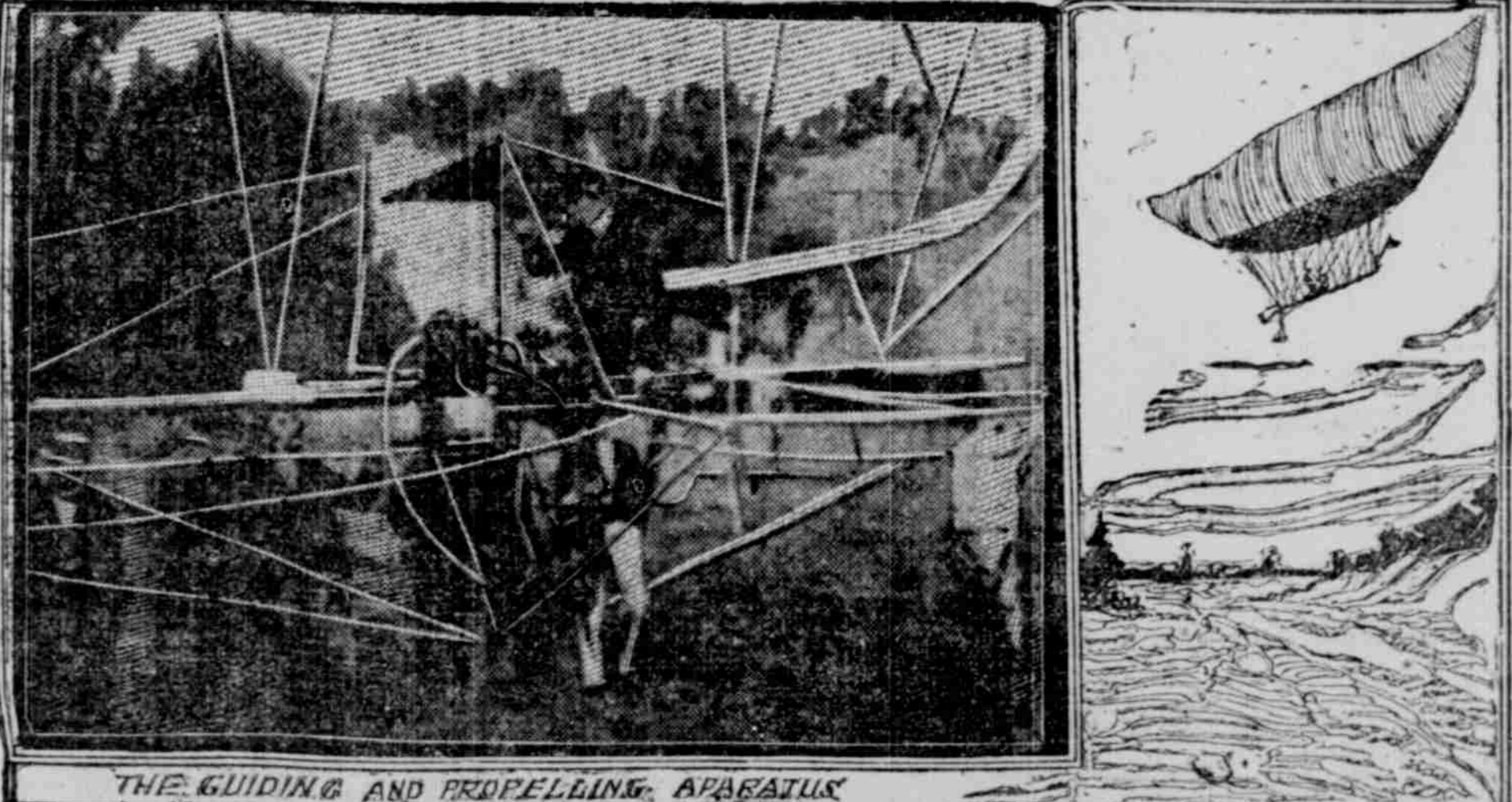
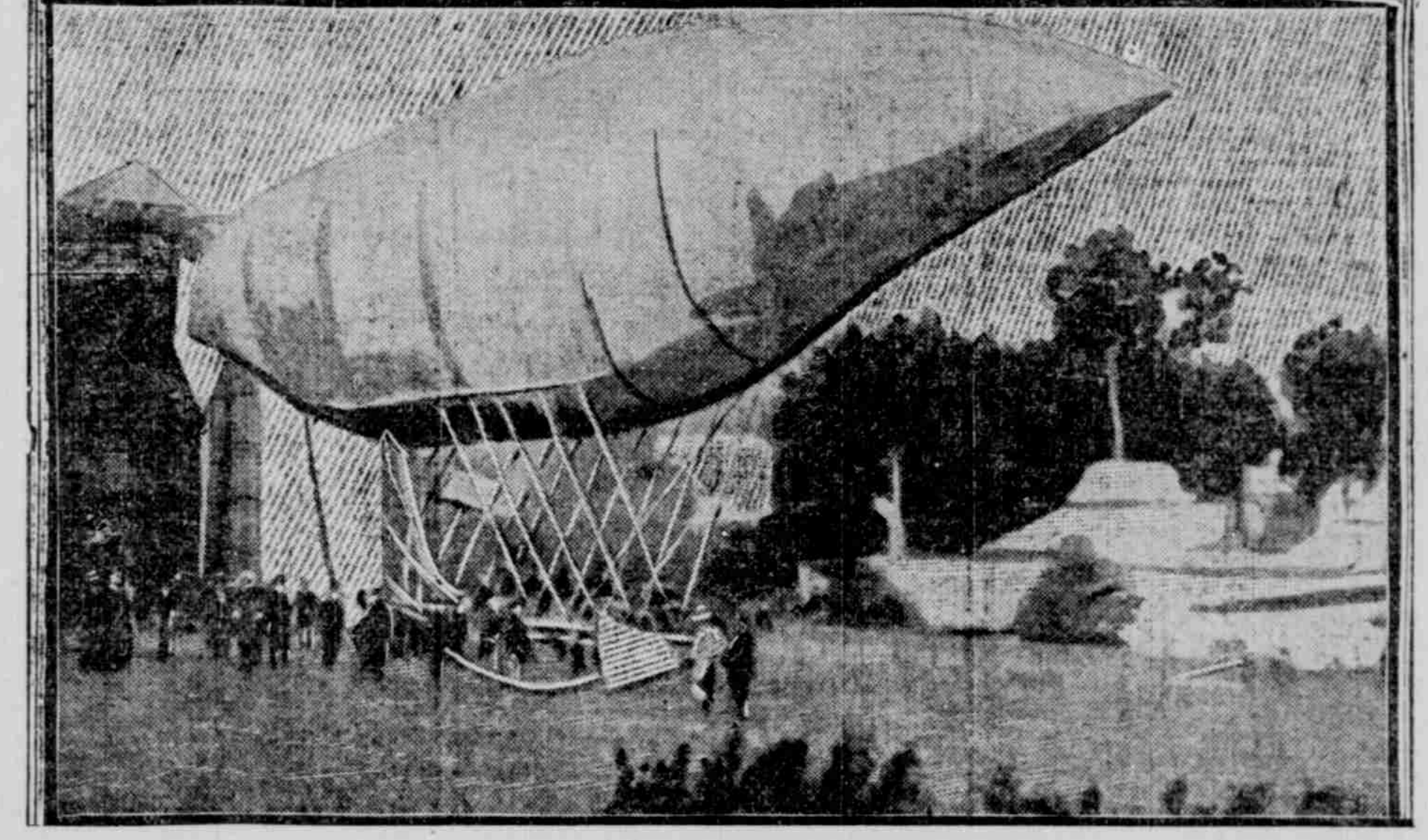
Baltimore American.

Every one who uses a telephone will watch eagerly for the outcome of a suit brought by a business man of Wheaton, Wash., to recover damages from the local telephone company for breach of contract in failing to give "prompt and effective service" as made and provided in the agreement. Through inattention of employees the merchant has been compelled to spend minutes at various times in reaching important customers, and sometimes he has been unable even to get a reply to a call for "central." In the manner much of his working time has been wasted and some of his best custom alienated.

Millions of telephone users will appreciate the poor Westerner's complaint. They know the daily indignities that have been put upon him. They have spent half an hour getting a number, only to be cut off as the conversation began. They have felt the burning passion, they know the murderous thought that has crept into the brain of the thirteenth unprosperous attempt to raise "central," and they remember the fierce resentment bred of a five-minute ring in the receiver which they have held patiently to a waiting ear. They have gone away vowing the direst vengeance, physical and immediate, upon the whole telephone system and its directors, after which they have gradually reduced their elaborate and malicious schemes of reprisal to an action at law. Then they have thought better of it and finally subsided, muttering but submissive.

So it always has been. The telephone victim is patient and long suffering. If this one actually goes into court and wins his fight he will be applauded by an enormous multitude, none of whom has had the courage to do what he has done. Those who have lost billions of hours and an incalculable amount of good temper may feel repaid to know that they can have redress, substantial and pecuniary. In addition to the license to shout themselves into an apoplectic stroke which they now enjoy.

SANTOS DUMONT'S DIRIGIBLE BALLOON.



THE GUIDING AND PROPELLING APPARATUS.

Santos Dumont, the Brazilian aeronaut, who created a sensation in Paris by circling the Eiffel tower with his dirigible balloon, and afterwards came near losing his life by dropping into Monaco bay, is now in the United States perfecting arrangements for an exhibition at the St. Louis exposition. He proposes to mark out an aerial course by means of anchored balloons and race over the course in flying machines.

NEWS OF LABOR FIELD

REPORT OF UNITED STATES LABOR COMMISSIONER WRIGHT.

It Covers Strikes and Lockouts from 1881 to 1900, Showing the Enormous Loss to Both Sides.

MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

COST TO LABORERS, UNIONS AND OWNERS OF FACTORIES.

History of Labor Agitation in the United States—New York Bakers Conspired in 1741.

The sixteenth annual report of Carroll D. Wright, United States labor commissioner, has just come from the press. The report is on "Strikes and Lockouts" and is perhaps the most interesting volume ever issued by the Department of Labor. It gives in statistical detail the number of strikes and lockouts, the establishments and employees affected and the loss in money to laborers and employers for the years beginning with 1881 and concluding with 1900. The report shows that during this period there were 22,738 strikes, affecting 117,559 establishments and throwing out of employment 6,105,894 employees. Of this number 90 per cent. were men and 10 per cent. women. The loss in wages to these employees was \$257,862,478, besides \$16,174,785 labor organizations expended in maintaining the strikes, and the loss to employers was \$12,731,321. In the same period there were 1,945 lockouts, affecting 2,533 establishments and throwing 504,387 employees out of work, 82.4 per cent. of whom were men and 17.6 per cent. women. The loss to employees on account of lockouts was \$48,819,745, not including \$3,431,461 in benefits from labor organizations, and the loss to employers was \$10,927,881.

Of the strikes covered in the period by the report Indiana had but 532, affecting 1,964 establishments and throwing 12,344 employees out of work. The number of lockouts in the State was but 16, affecting 182 establishments and making idle 2,422 employees.

Of the total number of strikes 50.7 per cent. were successful, 12.04 partially successful and 37.26 per cent. failed. Of lockouts, 50.79 per cent. were successful, 6.28 were partially successful and 42.93 failed. Labor organizations ordered 14,457 of the strikes, and succeeded in 52.26 per cent., partially succeeded in 13.90 per cent. and failed in 33.84 per cent. Strikes that were not ordered by labor organizations numbered 8,281—35.56 per cent. being successful, 9.05 per cent. partially successful and 55.39 failures. Of the total number of strikes 35.02 per cent. of the employees were affected in successful strikes, 16.72 per cent. in partially successful strikes and 48.26 per cent. in strikes that failed.

The leading causes of the strikes in the twenty-year period, in percentages, follow: Increase in wages, 28.70; increase in wages and reduction of hours, 11.23; reduction of hours, 11.16; against reduction of wages, 7.17; in sympathy with other strikes, 2.47; against employment of nonunion men, 2.34; adoption of new scale, 2.33; recognition of the union, 1.40; increase in wages and reduction of hours, 1.35; enforcement of union rules, .91; adoption of union scale, .79; reduction of hours and against being compelled to board with employer, .79; against task system, .73; reduction of hours and against task system, .77; adoption of union rules and union scale, .75; reinstatement of discharged employees, .74; increase in wages, Saturday half holiday and privilege of working for employers, not members of masters' association, .65; against reduction of wages and working overtime, .64; increase in wages and against using material from nonunion establishments, .64; increase in wages and Saturday half holiday, .62; all other causes, 23.14.

While the report only deals statistically with strikes and lockouts from 1881 to 1900, it mentions all the strikes and lockouts in this country from the earliest date known. The first strike of accurate date and which is recognized as the first by labor students, took place among the shoemakers of Philadelphia in 1796. However, there seems to have been a strike of journeymen bakers in New York city in 1741. The Criminal Court records of New York city show that information was filed against these bakers for combining not to bake bread except on certain terms. The records show that they were convicted on a charge of conspiracy not to bake until their wages were raised, but it does not appear that any sentence was passed. After 1796, strikes occurred at various intervals until 1829, since which time one or more have been recorded for each year, with the exception of 1841.

The word "scab" originated in 1839, in a strike of the cordwainers of New York city, and as early as 1821 a typographical society in Albany, N. Y., struck because of the employment of a "rat" in one of the printing offices.

General Labor Notes.

Baltimore claims 90,000 trades unionists. Nearly all of the woolen mills of Rhode Island are involved in a strike.

The vegetable and fruit peddlers of Albany, N. Y., have formed a union.

The United Hebrew Trades of Greater New York has a membership of 55,000.

The employment of negroes at Chattanooga has caused a strike of 1,200 molders.

Boilermakers of Springfield, Ill., have secured an increase of 10 per cent. in wages.

It is said that 70 per cent. of the employees of the cigar trust are women and children.

Job printers of Evansville have secured a scale of \$16 a week, an advance of \$2 a week.

The American Federation of Labor has chartered a colored musicians' union in Chicago.

Organized labor is so strong in San Francisco that even the milk wagon drivers are unionized.

The Illinois labor commissioner reports that 19,000 children are working in this State contrary to law.

A strike for shorter hours in the Wisconsin paper mills will likely involve all of the mills of the State.

The telephone linemen of New York city, who have been on strike for two months, have appealed to the Civic Federation.

It is said that there are 75,029 cotton operators in the United States and that their average annual wage is \$28.72.

It is estimated that 88 per cent. of the miners employed in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania are members of the union.

Ignatius Sullivan, president of the Connecticut State Federation of Labor, and by occupation a clerk in a clothing store, was recently elected mayor of Hartford, Conn.